

# **Rotenone Treatment of Tunnel Lake for Removal of an Expanding White Sucker Population**

## **FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND DECISION NOTICE**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region Four, Great Falls  
April 8, 2008

### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to treat Tunnel Lake and a small tributary stream with rotenone to remove an expanding white sucker population and restock the lake to create a mixed fishery including hatchery-produced westslope cutthroat trout and transplanted Arctic grayling. This action will provide a better growing environment for westslope cutthroat trout and Arctic grayling to improve recreational angling opportunity.

### **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on March 5, 2008.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken for 30 days, which extended through April 4, 2008. A letter describing the project proposal and how to acquire the EA was mailed to 45 individuals, entities and agencies, and a press release was forwarded to the current media outlet list. The EA was also posted on the FWP webpage at:  
[http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice\\_1652.aspx](http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice_1652.aspx)

Two comments were received during the 30-day review period. One individual commented that he regularly fished Tunnel Lake and fully supported FWP's efforts to improve the fishery. **Response:** Comment noted.

The other individual commented that although he did not oppose the project, he felt the monies used to complete this project would be better-spent enhancing walleye fishing opportunities in northcentral Montana.

**Response:** Although completing this project will require several manpower days, actual expenditures will be minimal. The rotenone that will be used was surplus stock provided by another FWP administrative region. The only other anticipated expense related to this project will include printing of signs notifying the public of project activities. Since the proposed action addressed the rehabilitation of a recreational fishery for salmonids, evaluating the potential to expand walleye fishing opportunities on other waterbodies in the area is beyond the scope of this EA. Conversion of Tunnel Lake to a walleye fishery would eliminate a productive native sport fish opportunity and provide very limited fishing opportunities for walleye.

## **Final Environmental Assessment**

There are no modifications necessary to the EA based on public comments. The Draft EA, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

### **Decision**

Based on the EA, the public comments received, and the benefits of improving a unique native species recreational fishery in Tunnel Lake, FWP has decided to proceed with the effort to remove an expanding white sucker population from Tunnel Lake. I have reviewed the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies and have determined that this action will have no significant impacts on the human and physical environment. Therefore, an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is subject to appeal, which must be submitted to the Region Four Supervisor in writing, and postmarked within 15 days of the date of this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the Department or participated in this decision-making process, and lay out how FWP might address the concerns in the appeal.



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Gary Bertellotti  
Region Four Supervisor